

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method for automated provisioning of computer networks comprising a plurality of customer accounts, wherein the customer accounts relate to specific customer hardware devices contained on the network, and specific customer software applications deployed by way of the computer network, comprising the steps of:

receiving at least one command to be executed on a network device related to a specific customer account;

reading parameters from a network database related to ~~the at least one command~~ said customer account;

determining whether the at least one command can be properly executed based upon the parameters read; and

executing the at least one command only if it is determined that the at least one command can be properly executed.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the command is executed by a network agent on the network device.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein the agent provides information needed ~~from the network database~~ to execute the command for comparison with parameters read ~~therefrom~~ from the network database.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4, wherein the determination that a command can be properly executed is only made if the information needed ~~from the network database~~ to execute the command matches the parameters read ~~therefrom~~ from the network database.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:  
receiving a message that at least one command is to be executed from a secure provisioning network; and  
verifying the validity of the message by requesting verification from the secure provisioning network.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the ~~separate~~ step of verifying is accomplished by way of a communication gateway of the provisioning network.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of determining is based upon reading software configuration requirements.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the software configuration requirements indicate that the at least one command is a customer specific command.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the step of determining comprises determining whether the customer to which the software configuration requirement is specific is the same customer to which the network device is related.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of executing comprises installing one or more software packages.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the step of determining comprises determining whether the one or more software packages relates to a specific customer.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~45~~ 13, wherein the one or more software packages that relate to a specific customer are installed by way of the step of executing only if it is determined in the step of determining that the network device upon which the one or more software packages are to be installed is associated with the customer to which the one or more software packages relate.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~15~~ 13, wherein each customer is assigned to an individual virtual local area network (VLAN).

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the one or more software packages is installed only if the network device resides on the VLAN of the customer to which the one or more software packages relate.

19. (New) A method for automated provisioning of a computer network having a plurality of computing devices that are associated with individual customer accounts, comprising the steps of:

for each customer account, storing at least one model of the software components for devices associated with that customer account in a database;

in response to a request to load a software component on a given device, determining whether said software component is consistent with the stored model for the customer account with which said device is associated; and

providing said software component to said device if said software component is consistent with the model.

20. (New) The method of claim 19, wherein each customer account is assigned an individual virtual local area network (VLAN) on which its associated devices are located, and wherein said determining step includes the steps of identifying the VLAN on which said given device is located and determining the customer account to which said VLAN is assigned.

21. (New) A system for automated provisioning of computing devices in a heterogeneous network, comprising:

a plurality of computing devices, with different ones of said devices being respectively associated with different customer accounts;

a database storing at least one model for each customer account of the software components for devices associated with that customer account; and

a controller that is responsive to a request to load a software component on a given device to determine whether said software component is consistent with the stored model for the customer account with which said device is associated, and to enable said software component to be loaded on said device if it is consistent.

22. (New) The system of claim 21, further including a file system that provides said software component to said device in response to said determination by said controller.

23. (New) The system of claim 22, wherein said request is presented to said file system by said device, and in response thereto said file system causes said controller to make said determination.

24. (New) The system of claim 21, wherein said network comprises a plurality of virtual local area networks (VLANs) that are respectively associated with said customer accounts.

25. (New) The system of claim 24, wherein, in response to said request, said controller identifies the VLAN on which said device is located and the customer account to which said VLAN is assigned, to determine which stored model to access.